CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/1230
30 November 1993

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

LETTER DATED 29 NOVEMBER 1993 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT TRANSMITTING A STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION ON 25 NOVEMBER 1993 REGARDING A DECISION ADOPTED BY THE SUPREME SOVIET OF UKRAINE ON 18 NOVEMBER 1993 CONCERNING THE START-1 TREATY

I have the honour to forward to you the text of a statement made by the Government of the Russian Federation on 25 November 1993 in connection with a decision taken by the Supreme Soviet of Ukraine on 18 November 1993 concerning the START-1 Treaty.

Please take steps to ensure the distribution of this statement as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament.

(Signed): G. BERDENNIKOV

GE.93-62803 (E)

STATEMENT BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Alarming news has reached us from Ukraine: that country has grossly violated its international obligations with regard to nuclear weapons. On 18 November this year the Supreme Soviet of Ukraine adopted a decision concerning the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START-1), which it has signed, and the Lisbon Protocol, which is an integral part of it.

The world waited a long time for Kiev to ratify these agreements. All the other parties to them - Russia, the United States, Kazakhstan and Belarus - did so a long time ago. Ukraine alone was dragging its feet. Without its approval, the process of deep cuts in nuclear weapons could not begin.

Over a period of many months promises emerged from Kiev that Ukraine would comply with the obligations it had assumed in the eyes of the world community. Very recently, during a meeting of State delegations from Russia and Ukraine in Massandra, headed by the Presidents of the two countries, Ukraine signed agreements embodying its reaffirmation of these promises.

However, we have now seen violence done to important international instruments, whose basic provisions have been deleted by Ukrainian parliamentarians.

Suffice it to point to the official proclamation of State ownership of nuclear weapons by Ukraine, and the rejection of article 5 of the Lisbon Protocol, under which Ukraine assumed an obligation to become a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear State - a fundamental condition for its joining the START-1 Treaty. Instead of fulfilling its obligation to destroy all the nuclear weapons located on its territory, Ukraine proposes to eliminate only 36 per cent of the delivery vehicles and 42 per cent of the nuclear warheads, while the entire remaining nuclear missile arsenal would belong to Ukraine.

In a word, Ukraine is rejecting all the obligations it has assumed both bilaterally and multilaterally in respect of nuclear weapons. How can such an international partner be trusted?

The Government of the Russian Federation wishes to state that the decision of the Supreme Soviet of Ukraine concerning the START-1 Treaty cannot be recognized because the reservations contained in the decision distort the goals of the Treaty. Specifically, the reservations are incompatible with article 19 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties.

The decision taken by the Supreme Soviet of Ukraine on 18 November this year creates a situation in which Russia is not in a position to maintain the strategic offensive weapons located on Ukrainian territory, as it has done in the past. In the present circumstances, providing such maintenance would involve the Russian Federation in a violation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The unilateral actions taken by Ukraine, which affect the interests of all States, may require the international community to take steps, inter alia within the framework of the United Nations Security Council, to prevent the undermining of the process of nuclear disarmament, strategic stability and the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Russia has been and remains committed to the policy of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, and strictly respects the principle that all countries should fulfil their international obligations. The whole world knows that the Government of the Russian Federation has endeavoured to do its utmost, in response to the wishes of the Ukrainian side, to facilitate Ukraine's fulfilment of its international obligations. All the issues related to the receipt by Ukraine of a "peace dividend" stemming from the elimination of all the strategic nuclear weapons deployed on its territory were resolved as far as the Russian side was concerned: agreements to that effect were drawn up and signed by Government leaders of the two countries. Russia also provided Ukraine with all necessary guarantees regarding its security, as provided for in international law.

The Russian side is ready to continue a constructive dialogue with the Ukrainian side in order to resolve the whole complex of nuclear arms issues. This requires recognition by Ukraine of its responsibility before the international community, strict compliance with the agreements it has signed, and genuine rather than bogus ratification of the START-1 Treaty and the Lisbon Protocol.